DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 149 536 **EC 103 852**

AUTHOR	Stetson, Elton G.; And Others
TITLE	The Effectiveness of Newspaper Use on Reading Achievement of Secondary Special Educational Students.
PUB DATE	77
NOTE	13p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Exceptional Child Research; *Handicapped Children; *Newspapers; *Reading Achievement; *Reading Improvement; Secondary Education; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

A 9-week program examined the effectiveness of newspaper use on reading achievement among 107 secondary special education students. Ss were assigned to a control group which did not use newspapers, or to two experimental groups, one of which used incidental and one, teacher-directed newspaper reading. Results of pre- and posttests on the Peabody Individual Achievement Test indicated that experimental Ss gained an average 6.6 and 3.6 months in word recognition and 5.6 and 1.5 months in comprehension while control Ss demonstrated no gains. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED149536

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The Effectiveness of Newspaper Use On Reading Achievement of Secondary Special Education Students

For years circulation and promotion departments of U.S. newspapers have been providing various types of educational services. In addition they have consistently reported successful classroom use of newspapers to help students learn about newspapers or to reach other educational objectives.

Problem

These investigators examined newspaper use as a strategy for assisting special education students to improve their reading abilities.

Related Literature

A limited number of studies have been reported in professional literature regarding the use of newspapers to improve students' reading scores. A search of professional literature revealed four research studies dealing with the topic. They include Berryman (1971), Maskovsky (1972), Wardell (1973), and Verner and Siedow (1976).

Of the above reported studies, only one -- that reported by Verner and Siedow to a section meeting of the College Reading Conference in 1976, dealt with teaching reading to special education students (educable mentally retarded). They reported

FC 10 38 52

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

E.G. Stetson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM"

that two groups of EMR students in a southeast Texas city enrolled for two months in classes using only newspapers as instructional materials in reading gained an average of seven and one-half months in reading ability. Reading scores at the beginning of the study ranged from 1.8 to 13.7 on the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT). In addition, the investigators examined knowledge of the newspaper and attitude. As a result of their study they concluded: 1) Gains in reading achievement for high school special education students can occur with a newspaper instructional program, especially when the students are extremely poor readers and when instruction in basic reading skills is given; 2) Gains in knowledge of newspaper parts for high school special education students can occur with or without specific instruction; however, greater gains occur with instruction; 3) Attitudes of high school special education students toward newspapers and related subjects can be improved through a newspaper instructional program.

Three additional studies reported reading gains for students in regular classes. Berryman (1971) reported significant gains in reading for below grade level students in grades four through seven following fifty consecutive classes using the newspaper. Maskovsky (1972) reported that high school seniors increased fifth and sixth grade reading levels to eleventh and twelfth grade during eight weeks of newspaper reading. Wardell (1973)

reported that selected reading comprehension skills of high school students -- especially students of high intelligence and high socioeconomic level -- were increased through newspaper use.

Procedures

Sixty high school students in grades 10 to 12 from four schools and 47 junior high school students in grades 7 to 9 from four schools were given the Reading Recognition and Silent Reading Comprehension subtests of the Peabody Individual Achievement Test with raw scores converted to grade equivalents.

One senior high and two junior high classes were randomly selected for experimental Group A. The instructional strategy for Group A students was student-selected incidental reading and student initiated discussions. Teachers, using classroom sets of newspapers, provided opportunity for students to read and discuss newspaper content of their own choice. Students could choose to discuss what they had read with individual students, or in small groups, or with the entire class.

Twenty-four students, one junior high and one senior high class, were randomly selected for Group B. In addition to receiving a classroom set of newspapers daily, Group B teachers were provided a 1½ hour workshop on the use of the newspaper as an instructional tool. The workshop consultants suggested activities to Group B teachers for using the newspaper for the

development of vocabulary and reading comprehension. Teachers, in turn, designed their own lesson plans utilizing the newspaper as the sole instructional resource to teach the reading skills they normally taught. Consultants with expertise in reading and in the classroom use of newspapers were available to Group B teachers upon request.

Thirty-two students, two junior high and two senior high classes, were randomly selected for Group C, a control group. They did not use the newspaper as a source for incidental reading and discussion and their teachers did not use it as a specific instructional tool.

- Editor's Option -

TABLE 1 HERE

The principal investigators conducted training sessions for four graduate teaching assistants who individually administered the two subtests of the Peabody Individual Achievement Test to the 107 subjects in the study one week prior to the beginning of the nine-weeks experimental period. At the conclusion of the nine-week period, the same graduate assistants administered the same two sub-tests to the 53 secondary students who had completed the nine-week period. Students who entered the experimental or control classes after the beginning of the experimental period

or who left the district prior to the completion of the nine-weeks period were not included in the post-testing. Likewise, students who were absent on the day that pre-testing or post-testing took place were not counted.

Test Description

The Peabody Individual Achievement Test (1975) consists of five general achievement tests which cover General Information, Arithmetic, Spelling, Reading Recognition (sight vocabulary), and Silent Reading Comprehension. The Reading Recognition subtest of the PIAT contains 84 individual words which the subject reads aloud to the examiner who scores the pronunciation as correct or incorrect. The Reading Comprehension subtest of the PIAT Requires the subject to read silently a sentence and then choose, from among four pictures, the single picture which best describes the meaning of the sentence.

The PIAT was chosen as the best instrument to measure the two dependent variables because: (1) The test is individually administered to provide reliable scores from special education students; (2) raw scores can be converted to grade equivalents with norms from first to twelfth grade; (3) it is one of the few tests which provides the wide norms necessary for special education students and (4) the test-retest reliability at four-week intervals is .84, allowing the investigators the opportunity to use the same instrument for both pre- and post-testing.

Results

Since three groups were involved, a one way ANOVA was used to compare variance within groups to variance between groups with $\alpha \leq .05$ set as the critical value. Four F-ratios were computed: pre-post word recognition and comprehension. The ANOVA yielded F-ratios which were not statistically significant; therefore, pre-planned t-tests were not employed.

- Editor's Option -

TABLE 2 HERE

The data, however, were further analyzed in terms of average gain scores for each group on the word recognition and comprehension subtests of the post-test. Experimental Group A made the greatest gain scores on both subtests; Experimental Group B ranked second; the Control Group C made the lowest gain scores. Pre-post test scores and gain scores for the three groups appear on Table 3. A nine-week period of using the newspaper for 20 minutes per day yielded mean gain scores in word recognition of 5.6 and 3.6 months for the experimental groups, as well as 5.6 and 1.5 month gains in comprehension. Scores for Experimental Group B evidenced a discrepancy of 2.1 months between average gains in word recognition and in comprehension. Control Group C evidenced no gains (-0.04 months) in word recognition and (.00 months) in comprehension.

(*Editor: This becomes Table One if you delete previous tables.)

TABLE 3 HERE

Conclusions

Although the use of the newspaper for reading/discussion and the teaching of specific reading skills did not produce statistically significant gains in word recognition and in comprehension, special education students did make educationally significant gains. Incidental reading of material selected by students combined with student-centered discussion appears to achieve best results with special education students. The discrepancy between gains in word recognition and comprehension is probably the result of the teachers' focus on specific word attack skills as opposed to comprehension skills. Emphasis on word attack simply produced improved word attack skills. When scores of the control group are compared to those of the experimental groups, the efficacy of using the newspaper in special education classes for reading instruction and as the basis for discussion appears to be established.

Table 1. Number of Secondary Special Education Students Assigned to Incidental Newspaper, Formal Teaching with Newspaper, and Control Group

Type of Group	Group A Incidental Use Of Newspaper	Group B Formal Newspaper Teaching	Group C Control-No. Newspaper	Total N
Junior High	N = 16	N = 13	N = 14	Junior High N = 43
Senior High	N = 35	N = 11	N = 18	Senior High N = 64
	Total Group A N = 51	Total Group B N = 25	Total Group C N = 32	Total Subjects N = 107

TABLE 2

RESULTS OF THE FOUR F-tests COMPARING SCORES ON THE WORD RECOGNITION AND COMPREHENSION SUBTESTS OF THE PIAT

PRETEST: WORD RECOGNITION

SOURCE	SS	df	ms	F	
TOTAL	6945.44	52			
BETWEEN	2.91	2	1.46	.01	NS
WITHIN	6942.53	50	138.85		

PRETEST: COMPREHENSION

SOURCE	SS	df	ms	F	
TOTAL	6818.23	52			
BETWEEN	1.40	2	.7	.01	NS
WITHIN	6816.83	50	136.34		

POSTTEST: WORD RECOGNITION

SOURCE	SS	df	ms	F	
TOTAL	8160.20	52			
BETWEEN	10.64	2	5.32	.03	NS
WITHIN	8149.56	50	162.99		

POSTTEST: COMPREHENSION

SOURCE	SS	df	ms	F	
TOTAL	7892.39	52			
BETWEEN	8.21	2	4.10	.03	NS
WITHIN	7884.18	50	157.68		

TABLE 3

PRE/POST WORD RECOGNITION AND COMPREHENSION MEAN GRADE EQUIVALENT SCORES AND MEAN GAIN SCORES ON THE PEABODY INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT TEST

		$\bar{x}$ SCORE		$\bar{x}$ SCORE		$\bar{x}$ GAIN[1]	
		PRE TEST	POST TEST	PRE TEST	POST TEST		
GROUP	N	WORD RECOGNITION	WORD RECOGNITION	Comprehension	Comprehension	WORD RECOGNITION	Comprehension
A Incidental Newspaper		3.11	3.67	2.99	3.55	5.6	5.6
B Formal Newspaper		2.55	2.91	2.62	2.77	3.6	1.5
C Control		2.65	2.61	2.65	2.65	(-).04	0.00

[1] gain reported in months

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Berryman, Charles. The Newspaper in the Elementary School: A Research Report to ANPA Foundation. Unpublished Research Report, University of Georgia, 1971.

Maskovsky, Marvin, "Daily Press is Stimulating Tool for Instructing Young Learners." American Education, 8 (January-February 1972) 3-6.

Verner, Zenobia, and Mary Siedow, "Effective Use of Media in Senior High School Special Education Reading Programs Through Interagency Cooperation, "Presentation to a section of the College Reading Association, 1976.

Wardell, Patricia M. The Development and Evaluation of a Reading Program Designed to Improve Specific Skills in Reading a Newspaper. Ed.D. dissertation, Boston, Massachusetts: Boston University, 1973.